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LETTER DATED 6 JUNE 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey to you the attached letter, dated 6 June 1997, which I have received from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations (see annex). Attached to the letter is the fifth bi-weekly report on the multinational protection force for Albania, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997.

I should appreciate your bringing the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 6 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit the fifth report on the multinational protection force for Albania (see appendix). The report is submitted pursuant to the requirement set out in paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997, in which the Council requested the Member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports, at least every two weeks, through the Secretary-General, to the Council. The fourth such report was conveyed to you on 23 May (see S/1997/392).

I should be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and the fifth report circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI
Ambassador

Appendix

Fifth report to the Security Council on the operation of the multinational protection force in Albania

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 28 March 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997), in paragraph 2 of which it welcomed the offer made by certain Member States to establish a temporary and limited multinational protection force to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance.

2. In paragraph 9 of the resolution the Security Council requested the member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports, at least every two weeks, to the Council through the Secretary-General. The first four reports were provided on 9 April (see S/1997/296), 25 April (see S/1997/335), 9 May (see S/1997/362) and 22 May 1997 (see S/1997/392). The fifth report refers to events between 23 May and 4 June 1997.

II. MULTINATIONAL PROTECTION FORCE

Political guidance

3. The Steering Committee, consisting of the political directors of the 10 troop-contributing countries and the Commander of the operation, continues to follow the overall situation on the ground and the full compliance of the activities of the force with the Security Council mandate. To date it has held meetings on 4, 9, 14, 23 and 30 April, 6, 13, 14 and 22 May and 4 June 1997.

4. Representatives of the following international organizations regularly attend the meetings of the Steering Committee as observers: United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Union (EU), Western European Union (WEU) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Belgium also attends the Committee meetings as an observer.

Cooperation with the Albanian authorities

5. An international meeting on Albania took place in Rome on 26 May 1997 under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Mr. Lamberto Dini, and with the participation of Mr. Franz Vranitzky, Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE. The meeting was attended by representatives of all the force-contributing countries and of Belgium, Finland, Germany, Japan, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The following international organizations were also represented: United Nations and related agencies, EU, OSCE, Council of Europe, WEU, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB)

and ICRC. Albania was represented by the Prime Minister, Mr. Bashkim Fino, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Arjan Starova, and the Minister of Finance, Mr. Malaj.

6. The meeting paved the way for a ministerial conference on Albania to be convened in Rome to assess the progress in the international efforts in favour of the political and economic recovery of Albania, give impetus to the process and provide direction for future action.

7. The meeting expressed, inter alia, appreciation for the neutral and impartial way in which the multinational protection force, acting under Security Council resolution 1101 (1997), carries out its mandate and for the positive results so far achieved in guaranteeing the safe arrival of humanitarian aid.

8. The meeting recognized that the presence of the multinational protection force was effectively contributing to the stability of the country and of the region, and stated that the Force, within the framework of its mandate, would contribute to ensuring a safe environment in Albania during the electoral process, taking into account in all possible ways the OSCE electoral concept.

9. The Prime Minister of Italy, Mr. Romano Prodi, visited Tirana on 1 June and had meetings with President Sali Berisha, Prime Minister Fino and other members of the National Reconciliation Government, as well as with the Command of the force.

10. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Theodoros Pangalos, visited Tirana on 3 June. He met with President Berisha, Prime Minister Fino, Foreign Minister Starova and the leaders of the main political parties, as well as the Command of the force and Ambassador Herbert Grubmayr, Resident Deputy of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE.

Cooperation with the international organizations

11. The force is helping create a secure environment for several missions of international organizations active in Albania. In addition to the regular contacts between the Steering Committee and the relevant international organizations, the multinational protection force Command in Tirana has daily contact through its civil military cell with the representatives of the main international organizations.

12. Daily contacts take place with representatives of OSCE. A part of the Austrian contingent has taken up duty guarding the OSCE offices. The Command of the force provides helpful analysis of security in the country and shows its willingness to examine, in liaison with OSCE, how to ensure a secure environment during the electoral process.

13. The OSCE Election Observation Coordinator is already assessing the security situation throughout the country on a regular basis, in close coordination with the multinational protection force. Relevant information on deployment of staff of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) within the country is provided to the force.

14. The Commander of the Operation, Admiral Guido Venturoni, together with the Defence Minister of Italy, Mr. Beniamino Andreatta, met Mr. Vranitzky in Vienna on 28 May to hold further discussions on coordination between the force and OSCE during the electoral period. The Director-General of ODIHR, Ambassador Stoudmann, participated in the meeting of the Steering Committee on 4 June and provided information about the ongoing preparations for the elections in Albania.

15. The Council of Europe sent a team of experts to help the Albanian authorities to draft the electoral law and regulations governing media access during the electoral campaign.

16. A WEU team is providing useful advice on the state of preparedness of the Albanian police and their ability to ensure order and safe elections.

17. An EU team is organizing the delivery of EU long-term and humanitarian aid. The EU General Affairs Council on 2 June adopted a "common position" defining the Union's overall action in Albania.

18. A World Bank delegation is working on a post-election recovery programme.

19. ICRC continues its humanitarian deliveries of medicines and food parcels for the poorest families.

20. WFP disembarked a food shipment in Durres under the protection of the force.

Force deployment

21. As at 4 June, the multinational protection force is composed of 6,365 men from 10 countries deployed in the north (Lezhe and Shengjin), in the centre (Tirana, Durres, Elbasan and Fier) and in the south (Vior and Argiorkaster). The composition of the force is as follows: Austria, 113; Denmark, 59; France, 952; Greece, 780; Italy, 2,926; Portugal, one plane crew; Romania, 398; Slovenia, 24; Spain, 342; and Turkey, 771.

22. A Belgian advance team carried out a site survey mission with a view to the planned deployment of a Belgian medical unit.

23. The force is planning further expansion of its deployment to additional cities in the north, as well as in the east and south.

Summary of operations

24. The force is engaged in intense patrol and reconnaissance activity by both day and night in many areas of the Albanian territory and along main lines of communication, as well as in action to support and protect many international organizations and non-governmental organizations, as envisaged by the United Nations mandate.

25. In particular, the force has provided protection to several humanitarian convoys along main roads, in different areas of the country and to international

organizations and non-governmental organizations carrying out aid distribution projects and programmes.

26. Airlifts and sea transport were provided by the force according to local needs, in some cases also for international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Reconnaissance missions took place extensively. The force's medical units were activated as appropriate.

III. CONCLUSIONS

27. The overall situation in Albania remains tense; however, security is slowly improving, mainly as a consequence of the presence of the force. The Albanian police are not yet in a position properly to counter acts of violence and persisting illegal activities by armed gangs. In some cases the fighting between these gangs has produced clashes that have endangered normal life. Explosions shook central Tirana on 2 and 3 June, wounding several people. Some violence may be politically motivated. Isolated shooting, mostly not aimed at the force, has caused casualties among the civilian population. In several cases the force's units provided help to evacuate wounded people to civilian hospitals or to the force's medical units. On 29 May, unknown persons opened fire at a navy helicopter transporting a seriously injured Albanian girl to an Italian hospital.

28. Public institutions such as customs, tribunals and prisons are slowly restarting their activities. Many more schools and educational institutions, including the University of Tirana, as well as some industries and commercial activities are gradually reopening as an indirect effect of the presence of the force.